

The Government tries to pretend that this is the only alternative, that the only way we can have a dispute settlement mechanism is through a bilateral agreement. It tells us that the only way we can deal with countervail powers is through a bilateral agreement. Of course, that is not true. The fact is there are already in place perfectly good mechanisms under the GATT system for dealing with those issues.

The Parliamentary Secretary says they will not work. We know the level of understanding he has about trade matters. Canada has already taken seven matters to the GATT and has had five decided in its favour. We have already used an impartial panel to determine what is right or wrong. The Minister tells us we are going to get an impartial panel of Canadians and Americans to decide this. If we really want an independent panel, Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should have an impartial panel of people who do not have any vested interest in the issue at all.

We also know full well that we could have within the existing system of GATT other kinds of applications to offset the matter. However, the one time the Government had the opportunity to prove that it believed in the international system, to prove we could make the system work, it backed away. In fact, it foreclosed the right of Canada to go to GATT on the softwood lumber case. We signed it away as part of the agreement. We did not have even the guts or courage to pursue that issue. We signed it away. Do not think, Mr. Speaker, that that does not set a precedent. Do not think that many other countries around the world are not seeing how Canada is putting its tail between its legs and running for cover. That does not contribute to the enhancement and growth of the international trade system.

It is true that the world is heading towards the emergence of regional blocks. There is no question that that is one of the clear and prevailing dangers in world trade. However, is it the solution or antidote for us to join the pack? Is it our solution to try to push that trend along as opposed to offsetting it? Should we not be fighting against that trend and showing we have a different solution?

We know, of course, and it is clear, that one has to continue dealing with the Americans. We have made many deals in the past as a Liberal Government. In fact, one of the last successful commercial arrangements signed was when I negotiated in the transportation area back in 1984. It was certainly more successful than anything the Minister for International Trade has been able to sign until now. Of course, we know we have to continue talking, discussing and negotiating. But we should make it very clear that the attempt to provide for the wide open, unrestricted, all inclusive ambition which will incorporate the concept of national treatment and prevent us from maintaining our capacity and ability to decide for ourselves what kind of economic blueprint we want for Canada, is what is really at stake.

That is why the amendment we put forward clearly recognizes the need to support the international system, to avoid the kind of entanglements an all-inclusive trade agreement would provide, and that any negotiations should seek to preserve the rights of Canadians to maintain their freedom of choice. That is the basis of our trade policy. It is far more clear, cogent and effective than anything we have received in the kind of resolution the Tories put forward today. That is why we think Canadians are turning against the Government. They do not have trust or confidence that it can negotiate well or is negotiating towards the right objectives.